



Montana

## Department of Labor and Industry

### Commissioner's Office

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DATE 09-22-08

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



### Montana's Labor Commissioner Keith Kelly Receives National Award

The National Association of State Work Force Agencies presented Labor Commissioner Keith Kelly with the prestigious Eagle Award, during the national conference in Charleston, South Carolina.

Recipients of the Eagle Award are recognized for their contribution to workforce development, unemployment insurance, employment, or labor market information services. Kelly was honored for implementing the final steps in the reorganization of the unemployment insurance benefits functions from paper claims to two faster more efficient regional call centers; encouraging the development of UI4U, an online registration system for unemployment benefits; offering to help Louisiana process UI claims and during the Katrina/Rita hurricanes; transforming the Job Service Workforce Center system to a regional management structure; helping Montana receive one of the first generation of Workforce Innovation Regional Economic Development (WIRED) grants; persuading the 2007 legislature to authorize spending of the state special revenue to pilot the Incumbent Worker program and pass UI legislation that provided a \$12 to \$13 million tax savings to Montana employers, while maintaining the solvency of the UI Trust Fund. "It's humbling to receive this prestigious award, but I can't take all the credit. We have some incredible folks that work at the Department of Labor and Industry who make these programs possible," said Commissioner Kelly.

Commissioner Kelly was appointed by Governor Brian Schweitzer in 2005. Prior to serving as the Commissioner for the Department of Labor and Industry, Kelly served as the

Director of the Agriculture for Montana and Arizona and was appointed as the National Administrator of the Farm Service Agency/USDA under former President Clinton.

Past recipients of the Eagle Award include: Governor of Mississippi Haley Barbour, NE Labor Commissioner Fernando Lecuona III, ID Governor Dirk Kempthorne and VA Governor Mark Warner.

The **National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA)** is an organization of state administrators of unemployment insurance laws, employment services, training programs, employment statistics and labor market information and other programs and services provided through publicly-funded state workforce systems.

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